

CHAPTER 24 RUTHLESSNESS



"CURSED  
CHILD."  
"BEG FOR THE  
REMISSION OF  
THY SINS."

"LET ME  
KISS THY  
LIPS,  
TOKANAAN!"

"KNEEL  
BEFORE THE  
ANGEL OF  
DEATH WHO  
ALIGHTS AT  
THIS PALACE."



"SUFFER  
ME TO  
KISS THY  
LIPS!"

GOOD,  
GOOD...  
IT SEEMS  
SHE'S  
GRASPED  
THE ROLE  
OF  
"SALOME".

"PRIN-  
CESS,  
PLEASE  
CALM  
DOWN!"









YOU  
HAD  
NO-  
THING  
TO DO  
WITH  
IT.

DON'T  
GET  
THE  
WRONG  
IDEA.



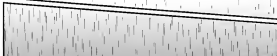
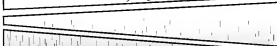
THIS IS THE  
FIRST TIME  
I'VE SEEN HER  
GET ANGRY  
LIKE THAT.



SINCE THE  
FIRST TIME  
I SAW HER.



I'VE ALWAYS  
THOUGHT SHE  
HAD THAT KIND OF  
TEMPERAMENT.





WHAT'S  
THE  
MATTER?  
YOU KEEP  
LOOKING  
OUTSIDE.



IS  
THAT  
SO.



SO I'M  
WORRIED  
IF SHE'LL  
BE ABLE  
TO COME

OH, IT'S  
COMING  
DOWN  
EVEN  
HARDER  
THAN  
BEFORE.

NO,

I AM  
SIMPLY  
FRIGHT-  
ENED

OF  
OUR  
DAUGH-  
TER  
WHO  
IS  
HEAD-  
ING  
HERE  
TO  
VISIT.







MAHA!



DID SHE  
ALWAYS  
SPEAK  
WITH  
THAT  
KIND  
OF  
VOICE?

WEL-  
COME  
BACK,  
NINA.

I'M  
BACK  
PAPA!



DID  
SHE...

ALWAYS  
HAVE  
SUCH  
A  
LOOK  
IN  
HER  
EYES?



DID  
SHE  
ALWAYS  
SMILE  
LIKE  
THAT?

I'M  
HOME!



HOW  
COULD I BE  
HAVING SUCH  
THOUGHTS?

...  
STOP.



NO,  
IT'S  
FINE!

THE  
STA-  
TION  
ISN'T  
SO FAR  
FROM  
HERE.

THAT  
SOME-  
ONE  
MIGHT  
BE IM-  
PERSO-  
NATING  
MY  
DAUGH-  
TER.



SEE...  
THE WAY  
SHE  
LOWERS  
HER EYES  
AS SHE  
BRUSHES  
AWAY HER  
HAIR...

IT'S  
THE SAME  
AS THE  
USUAL  
NINA, NO  
MATTER  
HOW YOU  
LOOK.

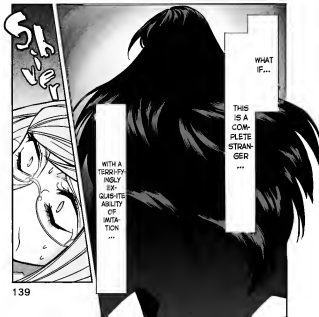


WELCOME  
BACK,  
NINA.

IT MUST BE  
TERRIBLE  
WALKING IN  
THAT RAIN.



YET,



WHAT  
IF...

THIS  
IS A  
COMPLETE  
STRAN-  
GER  
...

WITH A  
TERRIFY-  
INGLY  
EX-  
QUISITE  
ABILITY  
OF IMA-  
TATION  
...



.....



I'M  
GOING  
TO  
PREPARE  
DINNER.

OKAY.



SHE'S  
BEEN  
PRETTY  
MUCH THE  
SAME...

YEAH,  
WELL...

HEY,  
PAPA,  
HOW HAS  
HAMA BEEN  
DOING SINCE  
THEN?



OR SEEM-  
INGLY REST-  
LESS.

I SEE  
...

FROM  
TIME TO TIME  
SHE APPEARS  
TO BE DEEP  
IN THOUGHT  
WITH AN OMBY  
LOOK ON HER  
FACE.



YOU  
SHOULD  
JUST  
BE YOUR  
NORMAL  
CHEERFUL  
SELF,  
LIKE  
ALWAYS.

NINA...  
DON'T  
STRESS  
OVER  
IT.

THAT  
WAY, I'M  
SURE  
NANA WILL  
FEEL LESS  
ANXIOUS.

I WONDER  
WHAT'S  
WRONG...



NOT TO  
MENTION  
THAT IT'LL  
BECOME  
DIFFICULT  
TO USE  
NINA'S FACE  
AFTERWARD.

IF YOU  
DON'T  
MANAGE  
TO TRICK  
THE FATHER,  
OUR WRITTEN  
SCENARIO  
WILL  
COME TO  
NOTHING.

LISTEN.

YOU  
MUST NOT  
LET THE  
FATHER  
DOUBT  
YOU.









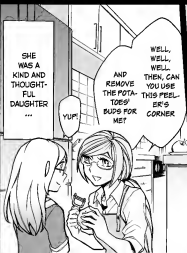


NOW  
THAT I  
THINK  
ABOUT  
IT...



THAT  
HELPS

I'LL  
FEEL  
THE POTA-  
TOES THEN.



SHE  
WAS A  
KIND AND  
THOUGHT-  
FUL  
DAUGHTER  
...

YUP!

AND  
REMOVE  
THE POTA-  
TOES'  
BUDS FOR ME?

WELL,  
WELL,  
WELL.  
THEN, CAN  
YOU USE  
THIS FEEL-  
ER'S  
CORNER



MAMA!  
I'LL HELP  
COOK  
TOO!

THERE  
WAS A  
TIME  
LIKE  
THIS...



NINA?!

OH MY...  
DID  
YOU CUT  
YOUR  
FINGER?

NOT TO  
MENTION,  
SINCE  
THEN...

THAT'S  
RIGHT...  
NOTHING  
HAS  
CHANGED  
FROM  
BEFORE,  
NINA IS  
STILL  
NINA...



I RUN  
WANNA  
DO IT  
EVER  
AGAIN.

IT  
HURTS

BUT SHE  
TRIED TO  
FEEL THEM  
TOO.

IT WAS  
DANGEROUS  
SO I TOLD  
HER TO ONLY  
REMOVE THE  
BUDS...



AT  
THAT  
TIME,  
I...





CHAPTER 24 END